

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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P 301110Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5372

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5799

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, LA

SUBJ: THE LAST ANGRY MAN IN LAOS, BONG SOUVANNAVONG

1. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED IN OTHER CHANNELS DETAILS OF ARREST IN VIENTIANE SEPTEMBER 28 OF LONG TIME POLITICAL MAVERICK BONG SOUVANNAVONG ON CHARGES OF PUTTING UP POSTERS AND DISTRIBUTING HANDBILLS ATTACKING PATHET LAO REGIME. SAME CHANNELS ALSO REPORT THAT ON AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 29 ARMED PATHET LAO USED GUNFIRE TO BREAK UP PROTEST BY SOME OF BONG'S FOLLOWERS AT BONGBJS RESIDENCE NEAR CORNER OF CHAO ANOU ROAD AND BOUN ROAD IN VIENTIANE, DEMONSTRATIONS AGAIN TOOK PLACE SEPTEMBER 30 AND MANY DEMONSTRATORS WERE ARRESTED.

2. NEW YORK TIMES AND TIME MAGAZINE CORRESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT WHICH, CONSIDERING BONG'S BACKGROUND AND POPULARITY IN VIENTIANE AREA, REPRESENTS A PARTICULARLY HEAVY HANDED REPRESSIVE ACTION, NEWS OF WHICH WILL SPREAD QUICKLY THROUGHOUT THE AREA.

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3. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT BONG, NOW 69, IS MEMBER OF ONE OF THE TWO OLDEST VIENTIANE FAMILIES, SERVED AS PROVINCE CHIEF OF LUANG PRABANG, FOUNDED LAO NATIONAL UNION PARTY IN 1947, SERVED AS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY FOR VIENTIANE 1947-51 AND 1955-59, WAS PRESIDENT OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY 1946-47, AND PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR REVISION OF CONSTITUTION IN 1948 AND 1956. HE SERVED IN SEVERAL CABINETS UNDER PRINCE SOUVANNARATH, PHOU SANANIKONE AND PRINCE BOUN OUM AND AS KING'S COUNCILLOR (1965-1971). MORE INTERESTINGLY, HE FREQUENTLY CRITICIZED AMERICAN AID AS A CAUSE OF CORRUPTION, ATTACKED THE POLITICAL AMBITIONS OF THE LAO RIGHTIST GENERALS AND SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT POLICY OF PEACE AND NEUTRALITY WHICH AIMED AT REINTEGRATION OF THE PATHET LAO WITHIN THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY 1955-1958.

4. COMMENT: THE HARD-BOILED CROWD RUNNING THINGS HERE NOW ARE NOT IMPRESSED BY THE LIKES OF BONG SOUVANNAVONG BUT THEY DO SEEM TO HAVE CREATED UNNECESSARY COMPLICATIONS FOR THEMSELVES IN THE MIDST OF THEIR PREPARATIONS FOR THE OCTOBER 12 FESTIVITIES. FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL NAKKHALA SOUVANNAVONG AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INFORMATION OUDAY SOUVANNAVONG, TO SAY NOTHING OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FINANCE BOUTSABONG SOUVANNAVONG WHO IS, I UNDERSTAND, BONG'S SON, ARE ALSO GOING TO BE PRETTY BADLY EMBARRASSED IF ANYTHING TOO BAD HAPPENS TO THE OLD MAN.
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